Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

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Item 6 of the provisional agenda
Issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process

Implementation of Articles IV and X of the Biological Weapons Convention

Submitted by the Republic of Korea

1. Since the ratification of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in 1987, the Republic of Korea (ROK) has been committed to fulfilling all of its obligations under the BWC and attaches particular importance to the issue of national implementation of Article IV and cooperation and assistance of Article X of the Convention.

Article IV: National Implementation

2. The ROK remains of the view that each State Party's robust implementation of the obligations under the Convention is of vital importance in ensuring the effectiveness of the treaty.

3. In order to effectively prohibit and prevent the development of any type of biological weapons and to control the manufacture of biological agents or toxins that can be used as biological weapons, the ROK's Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy (MOTIE) fully revised the *Chemical Weapons Prohibition Act of 2006* into the *Act on the Prohibition of Chemical and Biological Weapons and the Control of the Production, Export, and Import of Specific Chemicals and Biological Agents* (CBWPA).

4. The CBWPA was revised and expanded to provide a comprehensive set of rules and regulations on the prohibition and control of biological agents that had been previously scattered among various Acts, such as *the Infectious Disease Control and Prevention Act*, *the Act on the Prevention of Contagious Animal Diseases*, and *the Plant Protection Act*.

(a) There are 67 kinds of biological agents and toxins listed in the CBWPA that may be used only for peaceful purposes, such as the prevention and treatment of diseases. The Act contains provisions for declaration and authorization of any

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possession, production, export or import; and for inspections of facilities producing and possessing the listed biological agents and toxins.

(b) In addition, the CBWPA requires the export of biological agents and toxins to abide by the *Public Notice of Exportation and Importation of Strategic Items* in accordance with the *Foreign Trade Act*.

5. The Ministry of National Defense (MND) revised the *Biological Weapons Prohibition Directive* to facilitate the implementation of the BWC in the military, and it has been in force since May 2008. In accordance with the Directive, MND designated Korea Arms Verification Agency (KAVA) as the implementation organization for the MND's biological safety tests and appointed experts in the field of biology as verification members to conduct yearly inspections on biological research facilities within the military.

6. During the regular inspections, the following are monitored: safety of the biological research facilities, as well as the maintenance and management of various documents. The status of implementation of the BWC is verified on site. After reviewing any possible improvements, the MND monitors whether appropriate measures are being taken. The MND is confirming and managing the implementation of the BWC within the military through such safety inspection system and is maintaining the ... ost biosafety management.

7. With recent dramatic developments in the field of biotechnology, the respective roles of government agencies, the industry, and academia have been highlighted in the national implementation of the BWC. The Korean government has established a framework for close cooperation between government agencies and non-government organizations, with a focus on reinforcement of the national implementation of the BWC, including effective and efficient application of the CBWPA.

8. In line with the advancements in biotechnology, MOTIE has been working with the Korea Biotechnology Industry Organization (KoreaBIO), a non-government organization established for the purpose of promoting technology development and commercialization in the biotechnology industry, in the following three areas:

(a) Policymaking: The Korean BWC implementation committee consists of experts from the government, the industry, and academia. This committee is highly active in providing advice and opinions on government policies on national implementation of the BWC.

(b) Education: Workshops are held to improve biosafety and biosecurity levels and prevent misuse of biotechnology. In addition, there are on-site education programs that involvevisiting facilities where biological agents and toxins are processed.

(c) Awareness-raising: In order to raise awareness of the BWC and the CBWPA in the biotechnology industry and academic community, seminars and other events have been held, and a website has been developed. In addition, brochures and periodicals have been published to disseminate information on the CBWPA.

9. KoreaBIO is an important link between the government and non-government sectors to encourage the industry and academic community to actively implement the BWC. Such active participation of the industry and academia is one of the most effective ways to ensure faithful national implementation, and it will promote scientific and technological developments in the relevant fields.

Article X: International Cooperation

10. The ROK believes that international cooperation is critical in supporting national implementation, which Article X of the BWC acknowledges.

11. The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) is making great effort to develop various capabilities, such as detection, evaluation, reporting and response, to prepare for a potential public health crisis.

12. In 2017, instead of the usual self-evaluation, a WHO-International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) Joint External Evaluation (JEE) was conducted with participation of the WHO, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, China, Canada, Finland, Singapore, Australia, Thailand and other countries. The ROK was evaluated on a total of 19 criteria, including biological security and safety, preparedness and response in case of public health emergencies, domestic laws and acts on transporting and reporting high-risk pathogens, bioterrorism response plan and corresponding Laboratory Response Network. The JEE was a milestone for the ROK in recognizing the constant progress made by the ROK on its capabilities regarding infectious diseases and bioterrorism.

13. In addition, the ROK has participated in various activities against bioterrorism, such as ROK-US Military table top exercise (Adaptive Shield) and in the International Laboratory Response Network of Biological Threats.

14. The ROK hosted the UNSCR 1540 Industrial Outreach Conference (Wiesbaden Conference) in 2016, which was supported by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the Government of Germany. The Conference raised awareness of the industry regarding full implementation of UNSCR 1540 in the Asia-Pacific region, promoted better understanding of export control and border control regulations of major exporters and importers in Asia, and strengthened regional implementation of UNSCR 1540.

15. In the Wiesbaden Conference, various issues were raised, including the necessity for the simplification of the ROK's legislation and regulation, communication between the public and private sectors, and adequate compensation schemes. The Korean government showcased a range of programs for effective communication such as Yestrade, an elective ICP exporter system, and "Home Doctor" services. The 1540 committee proposed to Member States the establishmen t of legally binding compliance standards and suggested Member States to conduct with one another. The participants of the Conference shared challenges in export controls, including the difficulty on continued training of their export controls officers, frequent changes in the relevant laws, and mutual trust.

16. The ROK places great importance on preventing biological threats. Since 2005, the ROK has participated in the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction (GP) to contribute proactively to the efforts to prevent terrorists or states that sponsor terrorism from acquiring or developing weapons of mass destruction and related materials, equipment and technology.

17. The ROK has also actively participated in the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA). The ROK not only hosted the 2015 GHSA High-Level Meeting in Seoul but also played a leading role in organizing five Steering Group Meetings in 2017.

18. The ROK remains committed to fulfilling its obligation under the BWC and is ready to share its experience and practices in the field of national implementation and international cooperation with other States Parties and the private sector to strengthen the Convention.